



# The Rhumb Line

## Maine Maritime Museum

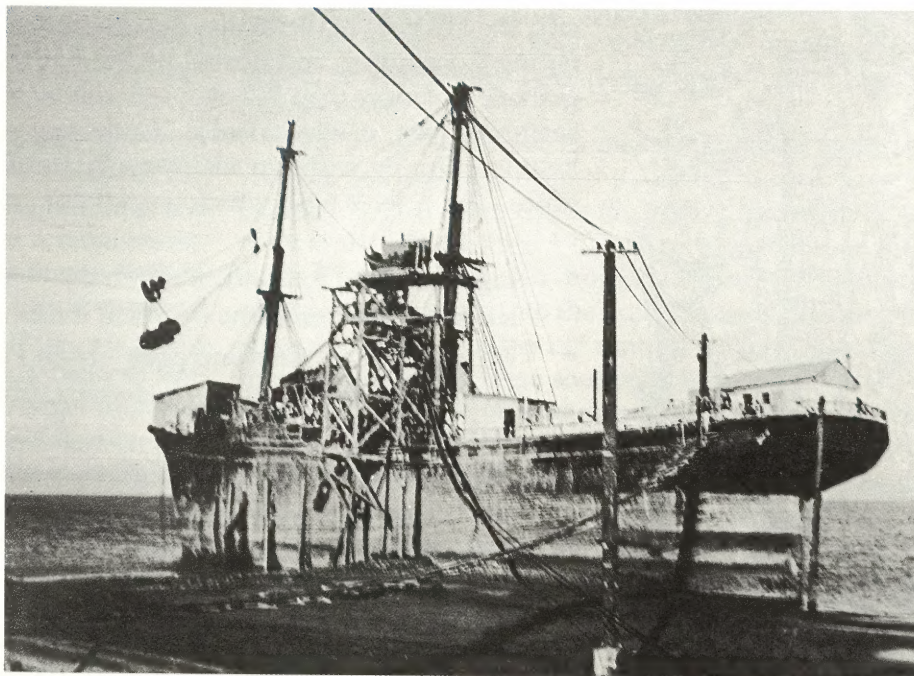
December 2001

Number 28

## Whatever Happened to the Bark *Guy C. Goss*?

Launched in Bath on Thanksgiving Day in 1879, the *Guy C. Goss* was unusually large for a bark-rigged vessel – 1,572 gross tons. She was the 100<sup>th</sup> vessel built by the firm of Goss & Sawyer (then doing business as Goss, Sawyer & Packard), and the thirteenth vessel they had launched that year. Her managing owner was Capt. William H. Besse and her home port was Wareham, Massachusetts, but her builders and others were shareholders. She was one of the largest wooden three-mast barks ever built, larger than most full-rigged ships, and was used like a ship. For many years she was in the Cape Horn trades, voyaging between Atlantic ports, China and Japan, and West Coast ports.

In 1900 she was sold twice, and ended up working in the salmon packing business, running goods, supplies, and workers between San Francisco, Seattle, and Alaska. In 1925 she was sold again, and made her last voyage with a cargo of lumber from Vancouver to Auckland, New Zealand, completing a long sailing career of 47 years. In Auckland she was libeled for debt, the crew making claims amounting to \$5,000. Under court order, she was auctioned in August 1926, and brought £308. We are very lucky to learn what happened to her next, and to realize that she is one of the few Maine-built square-riggers that existed within living memory. The last phase for the *Goss* was life as a plant producing shingle, or crushed stone. The following piece was written recently by John Sharps of New Zealand, who still remembers this grand old vessel. Our thanks go to him for permission to publish, and to his son Steve for sending it to us, and for sending the accompanying photographs of the vessel in her stone-crushing days.



*Bark Guy C. Goss as a New Zealand stone crushing plant.*  
Photo courtesy of Steve and John Sharps.

### Memories of the *Guy C. Goss* by John Sharps

I shall attempt to draw from memories of over 60 years ago to describe the last working years of the fine old wooden bark *Guy C. Goss*. I was one of the last persons to have walked her decks before she was destroyed by fire in 1935.

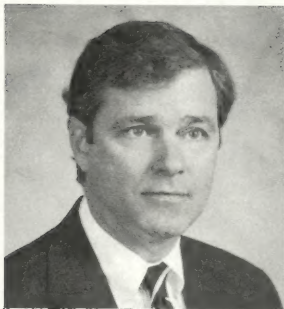
Although I am now 74 years old and what happened yesterday is sometimes hard to recall, my recollections of the plant installed aboard her, although not detailed, is reasonably accurate.

She was beached at the top of a spring tide on the coastline of an area known as the Firth of Thames, so named by Captain James Cook. The actual spot is known by the native Maori name of Wharekawā. At this place there was, and still is, a vast area of smooth

(Continued on Page 6)

*Our Mission is to collect, preserve and interpret materials relating to the maritime history of Maine  
and to promote an understanding and appreciation thereof.*





## From the Chart Table

In the days immediately after September 11th, a number of visitors told us they had come to the Museum because it was comforting for them to be here. Getting close to the objects in our collections and feeling the immediacy and steadfastness of our maritime heritage helped these folks slack the sheets a little and put some trim back into shaken lives.

I've just returned from attending the 6<sup>th</sup> Maritime Heritage Conference in Wilmington, North Carolina. Put on by historians at East Carolina State University, the Historic Naval Ships Association, and the American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee, and hosted by the Battleship *North Carolina* Museum, it was a gathering of more than 300 people involved in preserving and celebrating America's seafaring past. It was called a "Gathering of the Maritime Clans." One couldn't help identifying with our visitors who found solace by being with us in troubled times. The objects with which we tell our collective stories are powerful:

- Lighthouses great and small on the country's headlands and offshore ledges as well as in the bends of major and not so major rivers and lakes;
- Warships of all sizes and ages – from *Philadelphia* to "Old Ironsides" to *Monitor* to *Olympia* to *Massachusetts*, from *Turtle* and *Hunley* to *Pampanito* and *Nautilus*;
- Objects relating the world's greatest ocean commerce fleet, including the after cabin of the Bath-built Downeaster *Benj. F. Packard*, now at Mystic Seaport, and some of the tall ships themselves in the form of *Star of India*, *Balclutha* and *Peking*;
- Fishing vessels from the beginning of time to the modern day, great and small;
- The sailor's art and the fine art, literature and lore of following the sea;
- And, the people – the shipbuilders and ship captains; the chanteymen and chandlers; the buccaneers, privateers and harponeers; all those whose stories bring to life the stuff in our collections.

If ever we flag in the energetic preservation of our maritime heritage and in making it relevant to our many audiences, we need only remember the words of our visitors in mid-September or participate in a major (or even a minor) gathering of the faithful to renew the vigor with which we carry out our mission.

Tom

Thomas R. Wilcox, Jr.  
Executive Director

### The Rhumb Line Number 28 December 2001

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# Collecting the Present, for the Future



In the last *Rhumb Line*, I introduced a trio of ships newly represented in the Museum's collections, including the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer *Mason* (DDG-87), launched from Bath Iron Works just last June. Collecting artifacts relating to *Mason's* launch proved to be thought-provoking, as contemporary collecting can be a tricky matter.

Who is to say that the materials we gather now from the *Mason's* launch, the "last launch," will actually endure as historic documents? Perhaps shipbuilding and launching vessels stern-first will enjoy a renaissance, making the *Mason's* claim to launch-day fame a flash in the pan. Or perhaps future visitors (or future curators) may look at these items and wonder, "What were they thinking when they accepted heavy, dirty barks of timber, cribbing and quarter-blocks, keel wedges and souvenir plates, and made them part of the collections?"

As a curator, I like to believe that these acquisition decisions will stand the test of time; that our collections will remain relevant, that contemporary artifacts will have enduring value. The shattering world events of this autumn prompted many people to turn towards history, to consult accounts and collections made immedi-



Launching DDG *Mason* at Bath, June 2001

ately after another different cataclysm: the attack on Pearl Harbor. The oral histories, objects, and documents that were collected by museums and libraries in the immediate aftermath of America's entry into World War Two provide insight into our own human travels through a crucial point in history. And in a loose parallel, collecting contemporary evidence of maritime history will someday provide insight. The "last launching," although in no way comparable to the huge political events of World War Two, does mark a technological turning point.

We'll take our chances that the cribbing and keel wedges we collected from the *Mason's* launching will enhance the Museum of the far-distant future. I like to contemplate that future. I like to picture someone reverently handling the items from the *Mason's* 2001 launch, and gleaning insight into the building and launching of ships at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I like to think that in a century's time these souvenirs will be as evocative as the launching invitations and bottle nets, the newspaper and eyewitness accounts of a launch that occurred at the Percy & Small Shipyard in 1901 would be to us today.

Because ultimately, the Museum collects in order to preserve the material dimension to our history, for the future. New evidence and new insights are always available from the most mundane of objects. None of us can predict how people in the future will view what we experience today. The Museum not only collects raw material, but also uses it to create knowledge of Maine's maritime past. Through selective contemporary collecting, we preserve at least some raw materials so that others can create knowledge of maritime affairs in 2001, and in years yet to come.

— AW

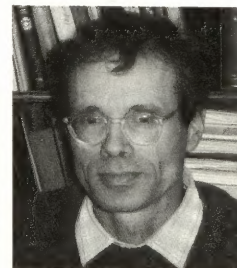
## Chris Hall Joins Curatorial Staff

In the curatorial department, we are pleased to welcome Christopher G. Hall as registrar. Chris comes to the Museum from Bath's Patten Free Library, where he worked for many years in the circulation and reference departments. He is currently completing studies for a master's degree in library and information science through the University of Maine's distance education program with the University of South Carolina.

His experience with computerized library systems and reference work is just one facet of Chris' background; he is a lifelong craftsman, woodworker, boatbuilder, and blacksmith. His interest in cultural artifacts and boatbuilding was enhanced by stints at the Museum's ApprenticeShop, where he was lead apprentice, and at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum where he restored the skipjack *Stanley Norman*. The

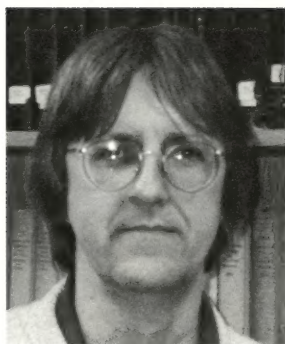
sharpie seen moored by the Wiscasset bridge was self-built over many years, finally launched in July of 2000.

Hailing from New Hampshire, Chris came to Maine following graduation from Hampshire College where he earned a degree in American Studies with a minor in Museum Studies. He and his family have lived in Woolwich since 1986. His wife Sarah is a Physician Assistant with Wiscasset Family Medicine; daughter Hannah is a sophomore at Vassar, son Eben is a junior at Morse High. Chris plays fiddle with the Portland Ceilidh Band, has been known to blow the bagpipes, and may be spotted in local dramatic productions from time to time!





# Librarian's Lazarette



The big news this issue is the arrival of Cathy Matero as library assistant. She began work here in July. Although she is cramming maritime history, she is a licensed librarian and was an enormous help the day she walked in. Cathy has taken over all of the ship plan and photograph orders, is providing much of the reference

assistance, and is taking over the periodicals work. All of this leaves the library director with nothing to do but get busy organizing all the stuff that has been piling up in corners. There has already been an improvement in the appearance of the stacks area, and more progress will come soon. Thank you, Cathy.

People often ask me whether the library will "get anything" out of the recent capital campaign. The emphasis of the campaign projects, of course, is on things that were needed, sometimes desperately, by the public programs and curatorial departments. However, the library was not forgotten; what we get is some deep

storage under the dining/meeting space. On shelves in this climate-controlled storage room (mostly used by the curatorial department), we can place items that are rarely needed by users of the library. One of those things is the original newspaper volumes, which we have on microfilm; researchers use the microfilm version, and rarely need to see the original paper. Another big collection of stuff headed for the lower level storage is the Museum's archives of records, which is only used by Museum staff and does not need to be in the library. Other possible items for deep storage include the duplicate periodicals and other things headed for disposal, and some of the supplies (acid-free boxes, etc.). By moving this material downstairs, the library will gain a great deal of needed space for shelving some of the incoming manuscript collections and other items which are starting to pile up in the corners. This sense of forward motion will perk up the library staff no end, and will ultimately benefit the users of the library in a tangible way, by making it possible for us to find the things that they want to see.

Nathan R. Lipfert  
Library Director

## Cathy Matero Joins Library Staff



We are delighted to welcome Cathy Sciascia Matero as our new library assistant, expanding the library staff by 50%! She is a Morse High graduate, and even worked here at the Museum for a summer or two in her high school years. She got her B.A. (History) at Nyack College and her

MLS at the University of Alabama, and has spent much of her career in corporate libraries. After a stint at *The Commercial Appeal* newspaper in Memphis, she went to New York, where she has worked in the reference li-

braries of The Dreyfus Corporation, James D. Wolfensohn, Inc., and McKinsey & Company. She and her husband, who is also from Maine, and their son Oscar moved from New York back to Maine this spring. She joined our staff in July, and has enabled us to make great improvements in our reference service. Twelve to four on weekday afternoons is now a safe time for researchers to find staff available to help them, and people who write in for help now receive an answer in a few weeks instead of a few months. Her presence will have an indirect effect, too, giving the library director time to work at cataloging our vast collections of unprocessed material. We look forward to accomplishing great things with Cathy around.

## Ship Paintings in Full Color Featured on 2002 Calendar

For the past several years, Bath Iron Works has produced an illustrated maritime calendar that is distributed to BIW employees, business partners, and community members. When Richard Stubbs, President of the Bath Iron Works Recreation Association, asked us if we'd like to partner with them to produce the 2002 calendar, we leaped at the opportunity.

You'll enjoy the result: a full-color calendar fea-

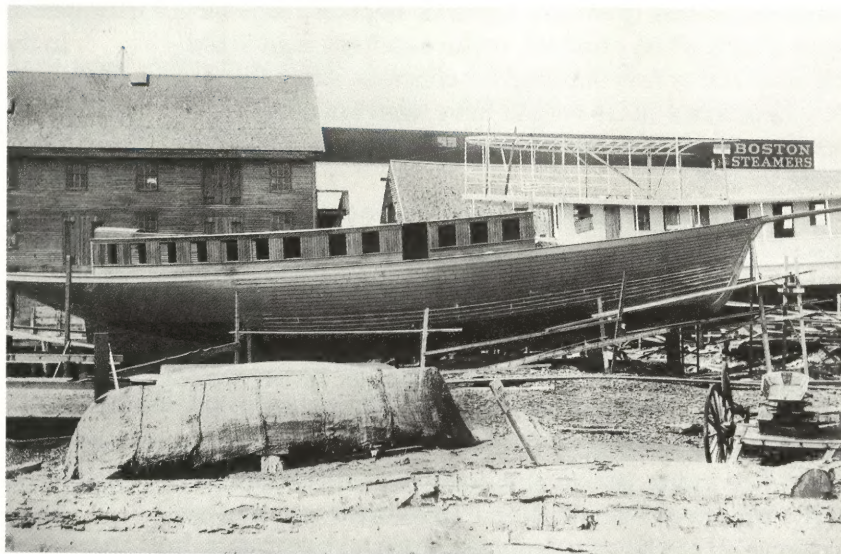
turing over a dozen of the Museum's best marine paintings, complemented by informative captions. The calendar is enhanced by Jim Stilphen's incidental sketches. We greatly appreciate the generosity of Bath Iron Works in making this partnership possible. Calendars will be available in December through the Museum Store, a beautiful and useful reminder of two strong Maine institutions with a common maritime heritage.



## PUZZLER from the Library

When I first saw this photograph, I thought it looked like Bath; the building on the left looks like the old sail loft which was down off Commercial street, and the "Boston Steamers" sign with the pointing hand looks like others that did exist in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Bath. However, the orientation of the buildings seems wrong, and the "Boston Steamers" lettering is on a building with corrugated siding, which I cannot place in Bath. Also, there was no shipyard in that area of the Bath waterfront. In this picture, both the rakish-looking yacht in the foreground and the coastal steamer behind to the right are undergoing repairs.

The leaning sign in the foreground says "Deposit No Rubbish Here" and the forward edge of the yacht's deckhouse supports a sign that says "No Person Allowed On This Deck." I wish they said something more useful. Can anyone identify the place, the yard, or the vessels?



### Last Issue's Puzzler:

Last issue we asked about these aerial photographs taken in 1967. In short order, we heard from Capt. Douglas K. Lee, who sent the following information.

"The schooner in question is the three-masted *Annie B. Mitchell*, built by M. B. McDonald in 1889 at Madison, CT. She was a medium sized three master of 463 GT, that measured 145.3 x 34.1 x 11.9. I understand that she had been built for the brownstone trade and was owned for many years by the Booth Bros. granite operation.

In a 1936 letter from John I. Snow, of the Snow Marine Construction Co, who owned her at the time, she was offered to a prospective buyer for only \$1000.00. The letter stated that she was in fairly good condition. She had had at least two new masts and other repairs, before she had been "hauled up" (beached) at the south end of Rockland, ME near the I. L. Snow shipyard. Obviously she was not sold and by 1941 she had been stripped of her rig and usable gear. Sometime in 1941 or '42 the McLoon Lobster Co. of Rockland purchased the hulk and had her towed out to Hewett Island, where they had a big lobster pound on the eastern side, as shown in the first aerial photo. Driven bow up onto the beach she formed a sort of breakwater from the winter north west gales for a narrow canal dug through the island to get to the lobster pound. The canal is visible to the right of the vessel.

Careful examination of the second photo shows the she did in fact have a conventional after-house. The planking of the house top is slightly different from the

quarter deck decking.

"During the summer of 1969 while a crew member of the schooner *Richard Robbins Sr.* I walked on what was left of her deck. By that time the entire hull aft of the mainmast had disappeared. Within several years the rest of her had fallen in and now very little of her lower timbers exist."

Hewett is one of the Muscle Ridge Islands of West Penobscot Bay. The day after Doug contacted us, we heard from Bill Colby, who confirmed this identification and added the information that there had also been a barge placed behind the stern of the schooner; the barge went to pieces in the first winter it was there.

Some time later, we also heard from David Belows, who confirmed the Hewett Island identification. Our thanks to all three gentlemen.





## Memories of the *Guy C. Goss*

(continued from page 1)

rounded stones (perhaps a glacial deposit from long ago) which when crushed, make excellent road building material or raw material for concrete. After she was beached, a few holes would have been knocked in her bottom, a few piles driven alongside her and she was there to stay.

Ashore they built a large engine shed which housed an electric generating plant which supplied the power to run the machinery aboard ship. This plant consisted of a large engine (very big to a small boy, but still large enough to warrant a ladder and platform for access to the cylinder heads). The engine, which drove the generator, was fuelled by coal gas, which was produced in a separate part of the building. The coal used was a fine grade, practically dust. Some distance away at the mouth of a small river, a small shed was erected to house an electrically driven centrifugal pump which supplied cooling water for the engine and, I believe, water for washing the crushed shingle.

A wire was run ashore from the main topmast head to a wooden tower resembling an oil derrick several hundred yards inland. This structure could be moved laterally so as to get a fresh "bite." A scoop, referred to as a bucket, when released ran down this wire and because the back end of it was rounded, would slide freely over the shingle. When hauled back on board, teeth at the open front end ensured that it scooped a load of approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cubic yard. I'm not sure of the exact sequence of events here but I know there were two types of stone crusher. One was known as the "lightning" crusher. I think that this crusher was used as the first stage to break up the stones to a reasonable size; the second one would have finished the process. The crushed shingle was then dropped onto a conveyor belt and deposited into the end of a screen. The screen was a large elongated steel cylinder punched full of holes. It had a slight slope on it so that as it revolved, the material moved along it over the section with the small holes first. As it progressed, the holes became bigger thereby grading the shingle into different sizes and dropping the shingle into different compartments depending on size.

The material was transported by sea, either by barges towed by tugs or by scows. The scows were beamy flat-bottomed vessels with centerboards, originally sail only, but at this time many used for this job were equipped with auxiliary engines, mostly semi-diesel. Large square ports were cut in the sides of the poor old *Goss* and the vessel transporting the crushed shingle merely had to berth alongside; a chute was inserted, a vertical sliding door raised and gravity did the rest. In those days most roading in New Zealand was poor and trucks not very big so the processing and

loading of the crushed shingle by this method was very efficient. I have heard with interest that lately sea transport of such material is being utilized again because of congestion on the roads.

In the years I am describing, my father, who was in charge of the plant, lived aboard with my mother, my sister, two workers and me. Life "aboard ship" for a small boy was just wonderful, with many interesting places to play. At times I would look up at the mastheads and if the clouds were moving, I would imagine the ship was sailing. Looking eastward over the waters of the Firth of Thames, one could see the rugged outline of the Coromandel ranges, blue in the distance. Again, in my imagination, we could have been sailing past a distant foreign shore. At night, there was the sight of a full moon rising over the ranges reflected in the water and at their foot, the twinkling lights of the old gold mining town of Thames. Truly magical.

Below decks there were stowed many items which would have been a treasure trove for a maritime museum. Her wheel was there and I am sure I can remember a flag – the Stars and Stripes. The Master's quarters, although showing signs of age, were beautiful. The saloon, I think, was paneled with birds-eye maple. A companionway from inside the wheelhouse led down below to a lobby. To port, a bathroom and W.C., to starboard, the Master's sleeping cabin with a massive four-poster bed. Straight forward of this was the saloon. Port and starboard in the saloon there were red plush velvet sofas set into alcoves. Above each of these were two small frosted-glass windows with, I think, delicate floral patterns etched in. These allowed light and ventilation between the smaller sleeping cabins (one each side) and the saloon. On the forward bulkhead of the saloon, there was a cabinet with a marble top and a brass rail which my mother kept polished. Forward again, the accommodation was repeated with I think sleeping quarters for three mates plus a pantry. From here a companionway led up to the forward end of the poop.

In those days, the area was sparsely populated and marine resources plentiful. At low water one

(Continued on back cover)

### Our Wish List

Please call Tom or Sue at (207) 443-1316  
if you can help out. Thanks!

A good-sized padded camera bag  
10-inch table saw  
14-inch band saw

Our sincere thanks to Bruce Odell of Fort Myers, Florida, and Bonnie Beck of Bath, Maine, who both responded to our call for a good camera.



## Welcome Aboard!

New Members  
July 2001 – October 2001

Bath Fuel Company  
Patricia Bonner & Jeff Emerson  
Deborah M. Bradley  
Joe & Frances Brock  
Janice Brown  
Mason R. Chrisman  
Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Colman  
Douglas L. Craig  
Glenda Drum  
Herbert Duddy  
Claire C. Dudley  
Alice Smith Duncan  
F. Allan Duncan  
Weld & Molly Henshaw  
Mr. & Mrs. George H. Hopkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur W. Hunt III  
Howard Dow Kelsey  
Harriet Knight  
Elizabeth Knowlton  
Herbert J. & K. Jane Kresser  
Kathy & Warren Lammert  
John & Linda Lancz  
Allen R. LeCornu  
Marian F. McAleenan  
Eileen McGuckian & Philip Cantelon  
Alice Meyer  
Charles Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. C. Fred Moulton  
Mr. & Mrs. James D. Peacock  
Penmor Lithographers  
Lynn Phillips  
Nancy E. Randolph  
William L. Read  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael T. Ryland  
Mr. & Mrs. S. R. Sawyer  
Michael Shook  
Susan & Jim Sidel  
Brent F. Spooner  
Gary Stephenson  
Richard D. Stephenson  
Alan D. Storms  
Mr. & Mrs. John A. VanVoorhis  
Andy & Barrie Wallace  
Bill Watson  
Lee Webster  
Don Wheeler  
Richard Wright & Martha Richardson  
H. Charles Yaeger  
Peter F. Zimowski

## Upcoming Events

### Spring 2002 trip to Newport, Rhode Island

Mark your calendars for Newport, Rhode Island in Spring 2002. Miriam and Charles Butts, who led the Museum's very successful tour of the Hudson River last September, are planning this four-day trip for April 17 -20.

Newport is a coastal seaport rich in architectural heritage and history of maritime trade to China and the Far East. More recently, it became famous for the great summer mansions built during the gilded age and its internationally known role as a yachting center.

Participants will travel from Bath in a comfortable motor coach, stay three nights in a Newport hotel, have specially guided private visits to select houses, museums, and sites that are important to appreciating Newport's rich history and maritime connections.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Maritime History Symposium

We will host our annual Symposium this coming year on the usual first weekend of May - Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> through Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be a special event this year for two reasons: it will be the 30<sup>th</sup> such program we have invited our friends to attend, and it will be the first Symposium in our new dining/meeting facility. We expect to be able to offer greater comfort, a superb sound system, and much greater convenience of access to all attendees this coming year, and we are planning a program which will not disappoint. Clear your calendars for the beginning of May, and stand by for details to come soon.



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## Memories of the *Guy C. Goss*

(conclusion)

could walk down and easily fill a bucket with mussels. Some of these could be used for bait when we launched the dinghy for a spot of fishing, only a few hundred yards out. There was great excitement one day when a large whale swam slowly past close alongside. I remember its large blunt head and realized in later years it must have been a sperm whale. The plant was working at the time but all work stopped for a short time while everyone enjoyed the spectacle.

When the *Goss* burnt down we were miles away on a visit to the city of Auckland and as such we lost just about all our possessions. We were also very sad at the loss of the *Goss* herself. As to the cause of the fire, arson was suspected but never proved.

I have never forgotten my life aboard the *Guy C. Goss* and have a great deal of admiration for the men whose skill created such a large beautiful wooden vessel. I can perhaps appreciate this a bit more than most as I later became a boat builder and worked on wooden vessels using the old tools, e.g. adze and plane, although none as large

as the *Goss*. Since those days I have had a lifelong interest in sailing ships, particularly wooden ones and can usually tell at a glance whether the ship is British or American. I hope that these few notes will be of interest to some people.

- A. J. (John) Sharps



*Bark Guy C. Goss under full sail.*  
*Photo courtesy of Steve and John Sharps.*

MAINE  
MARITIME  
MUSEUM



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